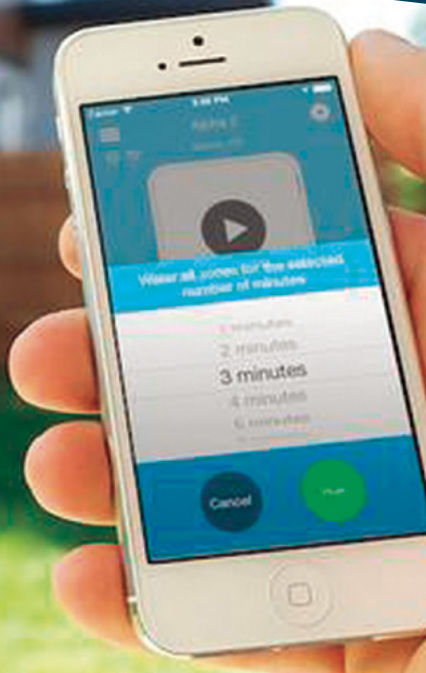


Woodbury City Update

September 2020 • Volume 21, No. 8

Deep discounts on smart irrigation controllers for Woodbury residents

see page 3



Learn about the candidates

Get to know your candidates and hear their views on the issues at upcoming candidate forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters Woodbury Cottage Grove Area (LWVWCG) and the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the candidates and volunteers from each sponsoring organization will be allowed to attend the forums in person. The public may view the forums live on government access Channel 18 (Comcast) and Channel 8542 (CenturyLink), and on the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (SWCTC) website at swctc.org. The forums also will be rebroadcast and archived on the SWCTC channels and website (swctc.org) leading up to Election Day.

League of Women Voters Woodbury Cottage Grove Area Candidate Forums

Tuesday, Sept. 15, Washington County Commissioner District 5 candidates (8:15 p.m.)

Thursday, Sept. 17

- Woodbury City Council candidates (5:45 p.m.)*

- Minnesota House of Representatives Districts 53A and 53B candidates, and Minnesota Senate District 53 candidates (7 p.m.)

- Woodbury City Council candidates (8:15 p.m.)*

* Indicates the Council candidates will be divided into two groups to allow for appropriate social distancing.

For more information, visit the LWVWCG website at lwvwcg.org.

Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce Candidate Forums

These forums will focus on business topics.

Thursday, Oct. 1, Minnesota Senate District 53 candidates (3 p.m.)

Tuesday, Oct. 6, Minnesota House of Representatives Districts 53A and 53B candidates (3 p.m.)

Tuesday, Oct. 13, Woodbury City Council candidates (3 p.m.)

Learn more at the Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce website at woodburychamber.org.

Applicants needed for citizen advisory boards Students encouraged to apply

Applications are being accepted through Wednesday, Oct. 21, for openings on Woodbury advisory commissions. Citizens appointed to these groups serve on a volunteer basis. The term is for three years in most instances.

Joining an advisory commission is a great way to learn more about the community and develop leadership skills. People of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

The city is seeking volunteers to fill vacancies on the commissions. In some instances, incumbents are eligible for reappointment. In addition, there are up to two openings on the Parks and Natural Resources Commission and Planning Commission for 11th- and 12th-grade high school students who are Woodbury residents. The term for students is for one year.

The groups with 2021 vacancies are:

Audit and Investment Commission

– The commission assists the City Council in reviewing the city's financial affairs. Responsibilities include recommending the appointment of the independent auditors and reviewing: the city's annual financial information, annual audit report and management letter, the adequacy and effectiveness of accounting and financial controls, and the city's investment policy and portfolio. The AIC generally meets three times per year.

Economic Development

Commission – The EDC is responsible for developing a strategic plan, including long-range strategies for economic development for the city. The commissioners recommend economic development policies and

programs to the City Council and work with the city's economic development consultant, City Council and staff in promoting the city, attracting economic growth and development, and retaining businesses in the community.

Parks and Natural Resources

Commission (only student positions available in 2021) – The commission is responsible for advising the City Council and other advisory commissions regarding matters relevant to parks, natural resources, and recreation. The commission encourages the conservation and preservation of natural resources in order to achieve a more sustainable community. The commission also encourages the dissemination of information to, and coordination with, individuals and organizations interested in parks, natural resources and recreation functions such as garden clubs, civic organizations, other communities and other groups providing recreation programming in the city such as athletic groups.

Planning Commission – The Planning Commission is responsible for all questions relating to planning, zoning and sign regulations. It reviews all applications for development and recommends approval or denial based on conformance with the comprehensive plan and zoning regulations.

South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (SWCTC) – The SWCTC is the cable television franchising authority for the cities of Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Newport, St. Paul Park and Grey

continued page 3

Council Perspective

By Mayor Anne Burt

Diversity, equity and inclusion: Helping all feel safe, welcome and connected

Some of you have reached out recently to encourage the city to do more as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion in our community. I want to share more about the progress we are making in this area.

The population of Woodbury residents of color has doubled every decade since 1990. Anticipating the changing needs that come with these shifting demographics – and with our commitment to providing the best public service possible to people of all backgrounds – the city has been working to gain a better understanding of all forms of diversity through a number of programs:

- A select number of staff participated in year-long transformative learning through Government Alliance on Race and Equity programs throughout 2016 and 2017. This group is a network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
- A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion employee committee was formed in 2013 to focus on improving internal processes and policies affecting employees and prospective employees. The group's goal is to ensure a welcoming, attractive and inclusive organizational environment for diverse members of staff. This committee developed a strategic plan for its work and reports to city management regularly on its progress.
- The city is intentional about seeking input from diverse groups of people in the community. As mentioned in my July newsletter column, our Police Department is working with an engaged group of volunteer multicultural advisors who help enrich the relationship between under-represented community members and the department. More information about policing, race equity, transparency and accountability is available at woodburymn.gov/

PoliceAccountability and woodburymn.gov/PolicingRaceEquity.

- In 2016, we partnered with Woodbury THRIVES, a local non-profit group, to host a series of intimate listening sessions about community health, sense of community, diversity and inclusion with almost 350 residents over the course of the year.
- In 2013, we worked with the community volunteers who run the Woodbury Citizens' Academy to add a culture and diversity session to the program (see article on page 4) and it has remained part of the program since that time. Over time, this session has shifted from a focus on celebrating cultural awareness to an intentional learning opportunity about disparities and how we can all take part in advancing equity.

In addition, fostering a welcoming and inclusive community was identified as one of the City Council's strategic priorities in 2015. We sought to be more active in improving community connectedness; enhancing community relationships with local government; and increasing engagement among all members of our community in what we deliver. Considerable work has taken place to implement this strategic initiative over the past few years. Below are some examples:

- Held a three month series of optional workshops for all interested employees to learn more about racial inequity and how public servants can work to eliminate disparities
- Completed the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark Study, which is a tool that helps organizations determine strategy and measure progress in managing diversity and fostering inclusion.
- Implemented significant employee trainings including implicit bias, intercultural competence, unconscious bias, etc.

- Incorporated numerous changes to city hiring and recruitment practices and continuously exploring pathways to success.
- Continued use of community and employee survey questions to measure diversity, equity and inclusion perceptions.
- Established an internal grant process to allocate \$14,000 for projects to advance diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Funds supported an Emergency Medical Services Academy; a bus to bring recreation programming to underserved neighborhoods; a feasibility study for off-hours childcare for city shift workers; a diversity referral incentive; and a regional training program for diverse residents to serve on city boards or commissions.
- Improved existing city policies and practices using a racial equity toolkit that considers outcomes and impact of policies, practices, programs, budgets and other decisions. Policies evaluated include job applications, Leadership Academy selection, community service officer recruitment, public safety intern qualifications, "values-based" hiring program, interview panels, community engagement strategies and boulevard tree maintenance.
- Added specific equity-focused strategy management duties to existing staff positions descriptions. Also added community

outreach duties to existing staff to streamline communications and enhance partnership opportunities between the city and local nonprofit organizations.

As Woodbury continues to grow and becomes more diverse, fostering an inclusive and welcoming community is paramount to the city's continued success. It is important that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all other residents feel welcome, safe and connected in the community.

I'm proud of the work that has been done to embrace our growing diversity to this point and recognize we have more work to do. The city's future planning must be reflective of its increasing diversity and desire to provide access and opportunity to all. The community must develop an inclusive and aware organizational culture, critically examine our services in order to eliminate barriers to equity, and recognize the existence of disparities in the community.

I am confident in our plans for moving forward. The city has decades of experience adapting to change, having evolved from a quiet, largely agricultural community in the 1960s, into a bustling, diverse, economic hub of the east metro today. It is important to retain and enhance all the great qualities and characteristics that have attracted so many people to Woodbury in the first place, while also realizing that "community" means something different to everyone.

The Woodbury newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Send comments to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-3330. Phone: 651-714-3500. Email: jason.egerstrom@woodburymn.gov.

Mayor: Anne Burt. Council Members: Andrea Date, Steve Morris, Jennifer Santini and Amy Scoggins. City Administrator: Clint Gridley. Communications Manager: Jason Egerstrom.

The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Jason Egerstrom, 651-714-3500; TDD: 651-714-3568.

Celebrate 'Night to Unite' Oct. 6 by participating in local food drive

Typically, Woodbury neighborhoods are invited to join cities throughout the state in observing Minnesota's "Night to Unite" on the first Tuesday of August. However, this year's celebration will take place the first Tuesday in October and will look a little different from past events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Night to Unite presents a unique opportunity to establish stronger connections between our Woodbury Public Safety staff and neighborhoods we serve," said Public Safety Director Lee Vague. "However, we cannot encourage large gatherings during this pandemic. So instead of holding neighborhood block parties, we are asking residents to participate in a safe, fun and unique local food drive."

Join Woodbury Public Safety in 'reverse parade'

Instead of Public Safety personnel visiting block parties in Woodbury

neighborhoods, Woodbury Public Safety is asking neighborhoods to form a "reverse parade" by driving through the East Ridge High School parking lot between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 6. Public Safety vehicles will be on display in the east parking lot of the school near the stadium.

The public is encouraged to bring food donations for the Christian Cupboard Emergency Food Shelf, who will have refrigerated trucks on site. Woodbury Public Safety staff in personal protective equipment will safely collect the food donations from the vehicles in the reverse parade.

Individually-wrapped donuts will be given away to people dropping off food (while supplies last). In addition, a coloring sheet will be handed out with instructions for a coloring contest, with the winner receiving a new bicycle.



Big Truck Day

The annual Big Truck Day event, typically held at the end of September in the Central Park parking lot, will not take place in its traditional form this year. Instead, the city is exploring incorporating some of the vehicles usually on display at Big Truck Day into the Night to Unite reverse parade on Oct. 6.

Event details will be shared via the city's website, social media accounts and InTouch email notification system once they are known.

Night to Unite is sponsored by the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association, AAA of Minnesota/Iowa, and local law enforcement agencies.

Advisory boards... from page 1

Cloud Island Township. The SWCTC manages resources received from the cable operators on behalf of its member cities and township.

Woodbury residents who are interested in serving on an advisory boards may call City Hall, 651-714-3500, to request an application. Applications also are available at woodburymn.gov; under the "Your Government" heading, select "Advisory Commissions." The deadline for returning completed applications is Wednesday, Oct. 21.

The City Council will interview applicants on Saturday, Nov. 21. Criteria for evaluation include: personal and professional experience which may relate to the subject areas of the board or commission; knowledge of the community; knowledge of city government process; contribution to creating or maintaining a diversity of membership with respect to geographic location, gender, age or race; experience from similar appointments. New appointees begin their terms in January.

Save money, water with city programs

It may be September, but it's not too late to install a smart irrigation controller for your irrigation system. Woodbury homeowners can purchase a Rachio WaterSense-certified smart irrigation controller through the city at a discounted rate of \$35 (retail value is \$230).

The Rachio smart irrigation controller utilizes weather intelligence to predict weather changes and automatically adjusts the watering schedule for the right amount of water for your lawn. Smart irrigation controllers can reduce water use by at least 20 percent without changing a lawn's appearance. The controller connects through WiFi to access recent rainfall information and forecasts before turning on the irrigation system, provided the home's WiFi signal reaches the controller (often located in the garage). The controllers can be operated through a smartphone or computer, and can be programmed with smart-home technology like Amazon Alexa or Google Home.

In the last five years, more than 2,500 Woodbury residents have purchased smart controllers through this program (see graphic). Visit woodburymn.gov/smartirrigation and purchase a smart controller at this reduced rate.

Commercial and association-managed irrigation systems

Commercial and homeowners association properties with irrigation meters (using city water) are eligible to receive funding assistance for improvements that reduce water use.

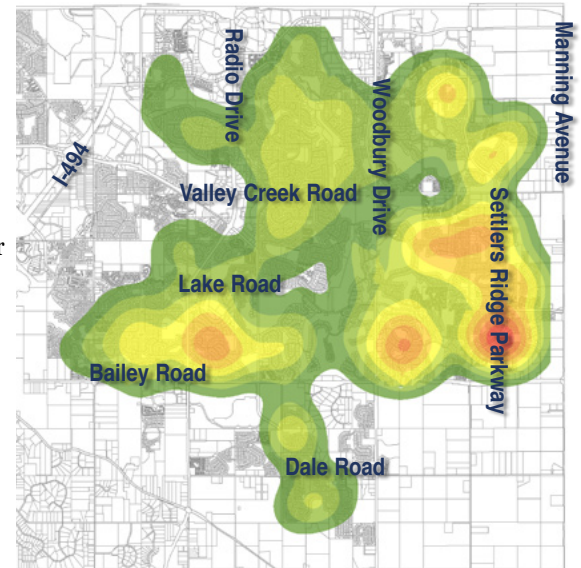
Approved projects will receive 50 percent funding assistance up to \$8,000 for one or more improvements such as:

- Upgrading irrigation controllers to be WaterSense certified
- Adding weather-sensing technology
- Replacing sprinkler heads with high efficiency models
- Completing an audit

Property managers and board members should work with their irrigation contractor to decide what is right for their system.

In the last four years, 60 properties have participated in this program, completing 72 efficiency improvement projects. Those interested in participating should visit woodburymn.gov/waterwise for details. Only projects accepted into the program will be eligible for funding. Improvements made in previous years are not eligible.

Questions about irrigation programs? Contact the Engineering Department at 651-714-3593 or water@woodburymn.gov.



The heat map above shows the areas of the city where smart irrigation controllers have been installed by residents. It's important to note that not all residential properties in Woodbury have irrigation systems.



Learn about the candidates

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Diversity, equity and inclusion

Page 2, Mayor's column



Celebrate Nite to Unite Oct. 6

Page 3

Postal Patron
Woodbury, MN

Fox Run Fire Station open house, Afton Fire Station trick-or-treating canceled

The traditional Fox Run Fire Station open house held each October in conjunction with Fire Prevention Week is canceled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the annual trick-or-treating at the Afton Fire Station on Halloween is canceled this year.

Questions should be directed to the Woodbury Public Safety Department at 651-714-3600 or fire@woodburymn.gov.

Woodbury City Update

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City seeking input on future of Lookout Ridge indoor playground



Has your family visited Lookout Ridge indoor playground in the lower level of Central Park?

The city is seeking input from the public about the long-term future of Lookout Ridge. The playground opened in March 2003 and needs improvements, which could take place as part of larger renovation of Central Park.

The public is encouraged to provide input through a brief survey at surveymonkey.com/r/LookoutRidge or by visiting the link on the home page of the city's website at woodburymn.gov. Feedback will be collected through Sunday, Sept. 20.

Questions should be directed to centralpark@woodburymn.gov or 651-714-3799.

Apply now for Citizens' Academy

The Woodbury Citizens' Academy is returning for the 12th consecutive spring in 2021. Applications are being accepted via email by the Woodbury Community Foundation, sponsor of the program.

The Citizens' Academy consists of eight sessions, designed to educate participants about the city and to encourage more involvement in the community. The weekly sessions are held Thursday evenings beginning in early February. However, the COVID-19 pandemic could impact this schedule. Updates will be provided through the city's communications channels.

The academy is open to the public and is limited to 30 persons. A \$50 donation to the Woodbury Community Foundation is requested. Enrollment is offered on a first-come, first-served basis.



If you are interested in applying for the 2021 Citizens' Academy or would like more information, visit the Woodbury Community Foundation website at woodburyfoundation.org or send an email to Claudia Millington at claudiamillington@gmail.com.